Statement by Ms. Indu John-Abraham
Operations Manager, World Bank Central Asia Office
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Excellencies, distinguished ministers, colleagues, and partners:

On behalf of the World Bank Group, let me congratulate the CAREC member countries, the CAREC Secretariat, and a special thanks to our host, the Government of Mongolia, for another productive year of CAREC activities and the celebration of this 25th Ministerial Conference.

Twenty-five years of CAREC is an important milestone. It is also a testament to what sustained regional cooperation can achieve. Over that time, CAREC has grown from a focus on infrastructure and energy into a broader platform for cooperation across trade, health, tourism, digital connectivity, and other issues that impact the region's future.

The World Bank Group is proud to be part of this journey. Over the years, our cooperation has evolved alongside the priorities of CAREC countries. The World Bank's engagement with CAREC countries reflects a long-term partnership that has accelerated in recent years.

The World Bank has contributed nearly US$14 billion to both national and regional projects in CAREC countries over these 25 years. But these figures tell only part of the story. What matters most is how our collective investments improve lives and strengthen economies across the region.

Regional cooperation is most effective when it responds to the priorities of countries themselves. We can already see this approach taking shape, and the energy and water sectors provide vivid examples.

Through the Regional Electricity Market Interconnectivity and Trade (REMIT) program, with WBG support, participating countries are strengthening and digitalizing connections between their power systems and laying the groundwork for regional electricity trade.

Likewise, in the water sector, the Water Efficiency and Conservation (WEC) program combines investments in modern irrigation with regional cooperation on shared water resources, better data and information, stronger institutions, and joint planning. These initiatives illustrate the value of combining national action with regional cooperation.

CAREC countries provide leadership and priorities; regional institutions provide the mechanisms for cooperation; and development partners bring complementary financing, knowledge, and convening power. When these pieces come together, regional ambitions can become practical investments and tangible results.

As CAREC enters its next 25 years, the World Bank Group looks forward to continuing this partnership—with CAREC countries, the CAREC Secretariat, regional institutions, and fellow development partners.

Our shared ambition is clear: more and better jobs, cleaner and more reliable energy, resilient water systems, greater trade and connectivity, and stronger preparedness for future challenges. Together, we can help build a greener, better connected, and more resilient Central Asia. Thank you!